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Subject: press release notice - EPA Releases Report on Maryland Agriculture Programs
Attachments: MD Ag report PR.pdf

To be released at 11:30am this morning. This will coincide with the reports being posted on EPA's website.

EPA Releases Report on Maryland Agriculture Programs

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today it has completed an evaluation of Maryland's animal agriculture regulations and programs. The assessment, which is one of six that the agency is conducting of state animal agriculture programs within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, found that Maryland has a robust and well-implemented state program.

EPA conducts periodic reviews of state programs as part of its oversight responsibilities under the Clean Water Act. This assessment looked at Maryland's implementation of federal and state regulatory programs, as well as voluntary incentive-based programs to meet the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution reduction commitments in its Watershed Implementation Plan under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL.

EPA will use the assessment along with its ongoing Chesapeake Bay TMDL evaluations to help ensure that Maryland has the programs, policies, and resources necessary to succeed with its plan to meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

The assessment found that Maryland's Nutrient Management Program has broad coverage, regulating over 5,400 farms throughout the state, including both crop and livestock farms. In addition to requiring farmers to develop and implement nutrient management plans, the program requires agricultural conservation practices such as setbacks for nutrient applications next to streams, and livestock stream exclusion practices. Maryland also finalized the Phosphorus Management Tool regulations in June 2015 which will help farmers properly manage phosphorus, based on the latest science.

According to the assessment, Maryland's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) program is well-implemented and requires permit coverage for approximately 570 farms out of about 5,400 farms regulated by the state Nutrient Management Program. The Maryland Department of the Environment issues CAFO permits, conducts regular farm visits, and takes enforcement actions and issues fines for noncompliance.

Maryland has developed an Agricultural Certainty Program to further encourage farmers to implement agricultural conservation and maintains the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share Program which provides funding to farmers to implement required conservation practices.

In addition to the Maryland assessment, EPA also released its evaluations today of animal agriculture programs in Delaware and West Virginia. The agency issued similar reports on animal agriculture programs in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia earlier this year.

The reports are available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/tmdl/ChesapeakeBay/EnsuringResults.html> (Click on the Agriculture tab)

Thanks - Matt

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